ENG255 GROUP PROJECT

I hope you enjoy this opportunity to be inventive, creative, analytic, collaborative, and enjoy American Literature in your own ways. Dig deeper into the work of an American artist (one that we’ve studied or one that you’ve chosen in our text or outside of our text) or a related issue or theme. Or explore your chosen artist or culture through other art forms (e.g. painting, music, dance, film, etc.). Your goal is to bring these artists / themes / issues to life for us in ways that give us a better appreciation of American Literature. Consider the talents you bring to the art of reading and understanding American Literature and work out from there. All choices are yours: the work(s)/author(s), your group members, the way you go about presenting. The last two weeks of the term will be devoted to your presentations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: This is a capstone project; in your presentation, aim to demonstrate our course goals:

- Close and critical reading and interpretation
- Analytic understanding of American Literature
- A recognition of how American Lit helps in understanding the human condition
- A recognition of how American Lit enhances personal awareness and creativity
- An ability to speak confidently about your own and others’ ideas

PROCESS

- Try to get to know folks in the class. Early on, choose a few to work with. Groups should be no larger than three or four members.
- Choose a work/author/theme from our text or in other canons of American Lit. You’ll have a lot to consider as you make your selection. Besides being a work or author or theme that draws you, your selection should have enough going on to reward you with a stimulating exploration and one that suggests a means of presentation.
- Work together in class and out-of-class on the best presentation format. Consider your own talents and skills in a variety of media. Choose any form that you’re comfortable with to enhance our appreciation of the work (e.g. debate, dramatization, painting, music, photography, video, sound recording, slam, collage, speeches, game shows, skits). Draw on the rich variety of talents and skills that your group possesses.
- Once you’ve made your group and lit selection, each group must turn in a GROUP PERFORMANCE OUTLINE (see format below). DUE: May 6
- Plan to present for up to 20 minutes. Please plan to stay within this time frame. NOTE: Practice your presentation considering time; be considerate of the other groups presenting after yours.
- On the day of your presentation, turn in a GROUP MEMBER EVALUATION. NOTE: Group members will be part of the evaluative process for all members of the group. Work collaboratively: make sure that everyone contributes from the beginning of the project.
GROUP PERFORMANCE OUTLINE
Please word-process and complete as detailed a sketch as you can. Remember this is a tentative plan and may be revised up to the day of presentation.

- Title of your Performance
- Group members’ names
- Work/Author/Issue selection
- Audience you are addressing
- Themes/Issues/Concepts you plan to demonstrate in your presentation
- Tentative outline/presentation plan
- Materials needed

TIPS
- Select a work/author(s)/issue that everyone in the group is drawn to.
- Take time to explore the work/author(s). (Be willing to change your choice if you hit a dead-end.) Let your interest in the material help your group to develop the ways in which you would like to present the material. Inspire the artistic in each other.
- Think about the scope of your topic. Plan for a 20 minute presentation.
- Keep it simple.
- Consider your audience. After having read and studied American Literature for 8 weeks, we are prepared to take on whatever persona you would have. For instance, you might like for us to become a 19th century audience, familiar with the works of Emerson and Thoreau, Poe and Hawthorne. Perhaps we shall be members of the local Lyceum. Or 21st century members of an American Lit class, readers who have a sound background in the period.
- Be creative! Include the talents of members of your group. Decide on the themes/issues/concepts that you would like to convey, then be playful and creative as you develop ways to convey those themes/issues/concepts.
- Plan the resources that you’ll need. If you are working with technology, preview the presentation with our classroom’s equipment before the actual presentation.
- Be respectful and responsible to members in your group. Share telephone #’s/e-mail addresses and stay in touch.
- Have fun together.

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES
- Creativity: presentation demonstrates a creative approach to the understanding of themes in American Lit.
- Information and insights: presentation provides information and insights about the work/author.
- Professionalism of the group: Group works/presents collaboratively.
- Class involvement: presentation involves/engages the audience.
- Presentation illuminates important issues/elements/themes in the selection/author’s work.